Secretary War Office
Bevan Baker Esq.

"Suso in Italia bella . . . "—Dante Inf. xx. 61.

British Committee in Aid of the Italian Wounded

(First British Ambulance Unit for Italy)

Under the auspices of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

Patrons :

His Excellency **MARCHESE IMPERIALI,** *Italian Ambassador.*
His Excellency **Sir RENNELL RODD,** G.C.V.O., G.C.B., *British Ambassador in Rome.*

Committee :

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.
HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.
HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH.
THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON.
THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.
THE DUCHESS OF SOMERSET.
THE DUKE OF SUTHERLAND.
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and others.

COLONEL H. BYRNE, C.B., *Chairman.* Miss MUNDELLA, *Chairman Ladies' Committee.*

Donations are urgently required and will be gratefully received by—

THE RT. HON. THE LORD MAYOR, Mansion House, E.C.,
SIR LAURENCE GOMME, F.S.A., *Hon. Treas.*, } 123, Pall Mall, S.W.,
J. THEODORE CAESAR, *Hon. Sec.*,
or, BANK OF ENGLAND, Western Branch.

[Ca. 1916]

Personnel of the Unit.

Commandant - - - -	Geo. M. Trevelyan.
Adjutant - - - -	Philip J. Baker.
Assistant Adjutant - - -	Bevan B. Baker.
Car Officer - - - -	Allan R. Baker.
Officer in command of Out-Stations	Geoffrey W. Young.

Medical Staff - - -	Dr. G. Sandison Brock.
	Dr. W. Propert.
	Dr. Wm. E. Thompson.
Quartermaster - - -	Donald Gray.
Commissariat - - -	F. J. Wellman.
Office - - - - -	L. A. Sheppard.

MOTOR SECTION.

Sergt.-Major Mechanic :
Gerald C. Marriage.

Sergt.-Major Chauffeur :
C. H. Dickinson.

Sergt. Chauffeurs :
Geo. Barbour.
H. M. Dyne.
S. B. Meyer.
D. B. Rose.
F. W. Sargant.

Mechanics and Chauffeurs :
E. J. G. Alford.
H. J. Amery.
H. W. Braithwaite.
R. G. Briscoe.
A. N. Grace.
L. G. Green.
Goldwin Gregory.
J. H. Groves.
J. Kemp.
G. A. Metcalfe.
W. B. Morgan.
A. Nelson.
G. H. Ogilvie.
Cyril Pease.
D. Perceval.
G. De Perrot.
P. E. Saunders.
C. G. Tarbolton.
Geoffrey Thompson.
Rupert S. Thompson.
Eric H. Toulmin.
J. O. Wood.
W. E. Wright.
T. A. Young.

HOSPITAL SECTION.

Matron :
Mrs. P. J. Baker.

Nurses :
Miss Isherwood.
Miss Legg.

V.A.D.'s :
Miss Carey.
Miss E. F. Gibson.
Miss E. M. Partridge.
Miss M. Saunders.
Miss E. Spackman.

Orderlies :
H. Allan.
P. R. Arundel.
J. H. Gray.
H. E. Glaisyer.
K. Kennedy.
M. M. Milne.
C. L. Payton.
Elliott Seabrooke.
L. F. Sessions.
R. V. Sessions.
H. J. Smeets.
L. G. Struthers.

Interpreter :
Dr. Thomas Ashby.

Secretary of the Unit in London : E. H. Marsh, 123, Pall Mall, S.W.

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When Italy became involved in the War, her admirers and friends in this country informed the Italian Government of their desire to give practical expression to the long-existing sympathy between the British and Italian people.

It was ascertained that a fully-equipped British Ambulance Unit would be acceptable to the Italian Government, and accordingly the offers of help were consolidated and organized by the British Committee in Aid of the Italian Wounded, and a motor ambulance unit was brought into existence. The nucleus of the Unit consisted of Mr. George M. Trevelyan, the distinguished historian of the Italian Risorgimento, and a number of men who had served with the Friends' Ambulance Unit in Flanders. In the course of a very short time a training camp was organized at Formosa Place, near Maidenhead, kindly lent by Sir George and Lady Young. About fifty men assembled here in July and August for a course of training, which included stretcher drill, sanitation, hospital routine, instruction in the Italian language, and lectures on Italy.

Upon the completion of training the Italian Ambassador in London, the Marquis Imperiali, visited the camp to witness a demonstration, the "wounded" victims being Belgian boys, who had had recent experience of the grim realities of war. His Excellency, in a gracious address to the assembled company, said that the Unit would carry a tangible message of the amity and goodwill of the British nation to the Italian nation, a message which he felt sure would be met with the most cordial appreciation by Italian soldiers and the Italian people. Speaking of the bonds of traditional esteem and friendship which for so many years have united the two countries, having in common so many interests and the pursuit of so many noble and lofty ideals, the Ambassador said the Italians were now fighting, and fighting very hard, in order to prosecute and carry to a glorious end the task which their forefathers undertook fifty years ago. It evoked from the British people the sympathy and support of which Italians were always mindful. While fighting for the complete unification of their country and the redemption of their brethren, the Italian nation was also contributing to the final triumph of those high moral principles which Italy, as a liberal country, has at heart no less than England.

PHILIP J. BAKER. GEO. M. TREVELYAN.
ALLAN R. BAKER. GEOFFREY W. YOUNG.

The first party, consisting of 52 men and 26 cars, left Formosa Place on Friday, August 20th, and camped near Winchester that night. On the following day they were conveyed to Havre in Government transports.

During the following week the party crossed France by road, sleeping on the stretchers in their ambulances by night, and receiving everywhere an enthusiastic welcome and gifts of fruit and flowers from the French people.

On arrival at the frontier town of Modane they were met by Signor Nathan, recently Mayor of Rome, and Lord Monson, Commissioner for the British Red Cross Society in Italy. The Italian War Office arranged for a special train to convey the fleet of ambulances through the Mont Cenis tunnel and across Northern Italy to the front.

At Turin the train halted for a few hours, and the party were officially welcomed by the Commander of the Turin district.

Throughout the journey the party received a most enthusiastic welcome, and the new ambulance cars and up-to-date equipment aroused the keenest interest.

On arrival at the front some days were spent in settling in.

A large villa within sound of the guns had been assigned to the party and was rapidly equipped as a hospital, a beginning having been made with fifty beds, but at the time of writing these lines there are actually more than 150 patients in residence.

The Unit has several times been honoured by the presence of distinguished visitors. Very soon after their arrival General Cadorna, the Italian Generalissimo, reviewed the Unit. Soon after, His Majesty King Victor Emmanuel III. paid a surprise visit, and found our men most busily engaged with the preparations for the hospital.

Among other visitors allusion may be made to the Duchess d'Aosta, who made a complete tour of inspection of the hospital and expressed herself delighted with the arrangements; to General Gonzaga, commanding the second army, and to General Capello in command of the sixth corps of the same (to which the Unit is attached) who subsequently wrote to Mr. Trevelyan the letter which appears on page 8.

The main work of the Unit consists, as was originally intended, of carrying the wounded; and up till now our cars have covered about 90,000 kilometres and carried about 13,000 wounded men. It may be pointed out that this record was achieved on roads and under conditions which are entirely different from anything that we are accustomed to at home or in France. The roads, whether deep in dust, mud or frozen snow, are always extremely bad for all traffic and impose a very great strain both on men and cars. Much of the driving, especially on the dangerous mountain roads, has to be done at night and without lights. As these winding roads are often unfenced the dangers of the work may be imagined.

Our Unit now has three out-stations in *Italia irredenta* close to the fighting and actually under fire. The wounded are brought to these and are afterwards evacuated to our hospital which is some miles in the rear.

On certain stretches of the roads leading to these out-stations our cars have to run the gauntlet of Austrian shell-fire, but no serious damage has yet occurred from this cause, either to the cars, the occupants, or the drivers. Indeed, since the extremely heavy fighting

The March Past the Italian Ambassador.

which began on this front about October 21st, our ambulances have actually been fired at less than before, no doubt because the Austrian batteries are now "on their lawful occasions."

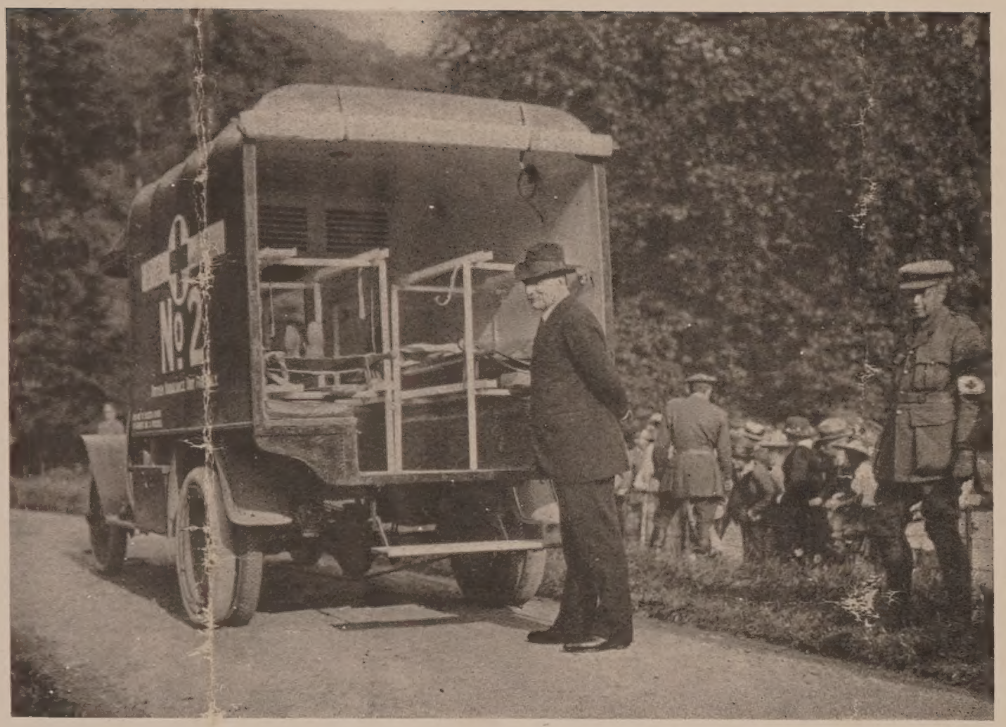
The work has increased enormously, and the numbers of wounded carried had more than doubled in the week ending November 13th; both cars and drivers are working at the highest possible pressure, and are regarded as the very heart (or "eye" as the Italians call it) of the ambulance service of the Sixth Army Corps.

The gratitude of the wounded to our men at every stage is very touching, and the feeling of the soldiers is reflected in the complete fraternity with which the First British Ambulance Unit has been welcomed by its *confrères* of the Italian Service.

Since the Unit started we have been allowed to send out eight nurses, who arrived in time to take part in the great rush of work since the beginning of the "offensive." The hospital has indeed been filled to the very limit of its capacity during the last fortnight, and as each batch of wounded recovers sufficiently to be evacuated and moved on to the base hospitals, a fresh batch is brought in from the out-stations in the hills. Fortunately, a number of bales containing hospital clothing, sent out by the Committee here, arrived also in time for the rush, and the Commandant reports that the wounded are now most comfortably clothed, and that the Italian officers who visit the hospital are "greatly impressed by the number and variety of garments which meet the eye in the wards."

The work of our surgeons and nurses at the hospital is greatly admired and appreciated by the surgeons at the base-hospitals to which our patients are passed on, and as ours is a "clearing-hospital" the authorities further down have every opportunity of judging of our work. Suffice it to say that never was service rendered by one nation to another more generously appreciated or more loyally accepted than is the work of the First British Ambulance Unit by the Italian Army.

The many friends and lovers of Italy in this country and in America may rest assured that no more solid token of that ancient friendship could have been devised than the sending out of this Ambulance Unit to the Isonzo Front, and that in supporting its



His Excellency the Marquis Imperiali, Italian Ambassador, at Cookham, 19th August, 1915.

STRETCHER DRILL.

work they are doing all that in them lies to cement that friendship.

The Committee feel that they are rightly interpreting the wishes of all friends of Italy in the British Isles by using the funds so generously contributed by the public in this most practical way.

The Unit is under the auspices of the British Red Cross Society and Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

The maintenance of a Unit such as this involves a very considerable expenditure, although nearly all the members have been able to give their services voluntarily. The Italian Government generously supplies officers' rations for the men and petrol and tyres for the cars, in addition to having provided a commodious mansion and grounds for the head-quarters. These advantages enable the Committee to draw on other sources to such an extent that money subscribed by the public is at least doubled: every pound subscribed helps the work to the extent of two pounds or more.

It now remains for all true sympathisers with the Italian people, our allies in the great purposes of the war, to support the Ambulance Unit in a fitting and thorough manner, and the Committee confidently appeal for subscriptions to the fund, which will be acknowledged by the Hon. Sec. as on page 1, and published in *The Times* and other papers.

Subscriptions should be sent to:—

THE RT. HON. THE LORD MAYOR, Mansion House, E.C.,
Sir LAURENCE GOMME, F.S.A., *Hon. Treas.*,
J. THEODORE CAESAR, *Hon. Sec.*, } 123, Pall Mall, S.W.,

or,

BANK OF ENGLAND, Western Branch.

Letter from the General commanding the District in which our Unit is operating.

COMANDO DEL VI. CORPO D'ARMATA,

14th October, 1915.

DEAR SIR,

I thank you for your hospitable welcome during my visit this afternoon.

I wish to express my very sincere appreciation as to the way in which your hospital, infirmary, sanitary arrangements and ambulances are organised so as to work with the greatest possible efficiency.

As representative of the Army Corps I have the honour to command, I desire to convey my sentiments of sincere gratitude to a body of most estimable British Citizens who, banded together in a most brotherly spirit towards the Italian Nation, have rendered on the battlefield under my control inestimable services; have carried, under peril of their lives and under the enemy's fire, close on five thousand of our sick and wounded to our ambulances and hospitals, have covered about 40,000 kil. of ground, have placed under the skilful care of your medical officers and nurses our wounded in your hospital wards.

It is a new message of affection from your great country to ours, whereby in its eloquent significance I am glad to be under a debt, and such a debt, towards the Britannic Red Cross and all its esteemed members.

Believe me, Dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

THE GENERAL OF THE SIXTH ARMY CORPS,

CAPELLO (LUIGI) (*Signed*).

G. M. TREVELYAN, Esq.

Extracts from Reports received from Mr. G. M. TREVELYAN,

Commandant, First British Ambulance Unit for Italy.

" . . . The relations with the highest Italian Authorities have been most cordial, and the welcome given by the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Italian Army to the British with whom they are called upon to work has been really enthusiastic. The khaki uniform naturally attracts attention in regions where it is otherwise scarcely ever seen and it seems to be a passport to popularity among the Italian soldiers. The intercourse carried on in Italian, French and English between the members of the Unit and the soldiers with whom they have the privilege to serve is undoubtedly helping to attain the object of those who sent the Unit to the Italian front in strengthening the new ties and the old friendship between the two countries."

" . . . The first out-station under Mr. Geoffrey Young has during this fortnight had its sphere of operations extended even nearer the front, and the number of its cars increased to seven, often aided by whatever cars could be raised for the night at Villa Trento. The other stations also continue to be extremely active under great difficulties. At Mr. Young's out-station the relations with the officers of the Italian ambulance section continue to be so extremely friendly, and even intimate, that I cannot refrain from mentioning the pleasure that their society and kindness has given to us, and at many other points our men continue to make friends with their Allies of all ranks."

" . . . The hospital meanwhile has had its fullest possible development this fortnight. Though a clearing station of only fifty beds, or more precisely of fifty four, which we have set up in the rooms of the Villa, it has during the first half of November taken in as many as one hundred and fifty wounded at a time. Of these more than eighty of the more lightly wounded were put into a great granary on camp beds, mattresses, and straw, where they presented a most picturesque scene under the long line of old rafters. The granary being lit by electric light, and the weather not yet being really cold, the wounded were extremely comfortable, and the place preserved a positively cheerful appearance."

" . . . The difficulty of keeping the cars upon the road, the number of small accidents, and the need of car repairs has been continually growing, and the insufficient number of drivers —a difficulty with which we continue to be increasingly faced— has made it necessary to call upon mechanics and drivers to work both by day and by night more than ever before. This call has been willingly responded to in a way that I cannot sufficiently praise, and the endurance and ability of the drivers in difficult night conditions has been very fully recognised by our Allies."

" . . . The weather conditions during the first half of November have been those of very severe rain at least every second day, and the roads on hill and plain are rapidly deteriorating into morasses. An increased number of cars could be used with the greatest advantage in this region, while there is a difficulty in keeping even our present numbers constantly upon the road."

" . . The Officer Commanding therefore feels fully justified in appealing for further support to enable this work, useful in itself and still more useful in its international aspect, to be carried on throughout the coming winter."

Off to Italy.

Report of the Ladies' Committee.

Chairman - - - Miss MUNDELLA.

Hon. Secretary - - Mrs. G. S. BROCK.

Mrs. P. B. BAKER.
Mrs. RIDLEY CORBET.
Miss FLEMING.
Mrs. PERCY HARRIS.
Miss MCGAW.
Miss PROPERT.
Mrs. G. ROTHSCHILD.
Mrs. HOLMES SPICER.
Mrs. G. M. TREVELYAN.
Miss WICKERSHAW.

The business of the Ladies' Committee has been to collect and forward supplies of hospital clothing, surgical dressings, etc., to the Hospital in Italy, and in this task they have been generously assisted by the various "War Hospital Supply Depôts" that have sprung up in London and the provinces to meet the needs of the wounded. The Kensington and Marylebone depôts have sent large consignments of surgical appliances and clothing, the Ipswich depôt a valuable case of dressings, the Edinburgh depôt 50 cases of sphagnum moss dressings, and the Croydon, Belgravia, Huddersfield, Barnet and Ascot depôts gifts of dressing gowns and other clothing. Private friends, too, in Edinburgh and elsewhere, have responded most kindly to our appeals for help; but the need is still very great, for the Hospital at Villa Trento takes in an ever-increasing number of patients, and the problem of clothing them and keeping them warm taxes the resources of our medical staff to the utmost.

We are still sending out supplies of every kind, and we hope in this way to help in maintaining the very high prestige which our Hospital enjoys with the Italian Sanitary Command. The Commandant writes that our clothing is greatly admired by the Italian officers who visit the Hospital, and the patients themselves look most cheery and comfortable in our garments.

We hope that our friends will continue to support us by helping us to send out still further supplies, for there can be no better way of showing our practical sympathy with these gallant allies than by helping to alleviate the miseries and hardships of a winter campaign in the Alps. All gifts for the Ladies' Committee should be sent to

Miss MCGAW,
5, Clarendon Place,
Hyde Park, W.,

by whom they will be gratefully acknowledged.

British Committee in Aid of the Italian Wounded

One of the Black Ambulances.

. . . First British Ambulance Unit for Italy . . .

Newnham, Cowell & Gripper, Ltd., Chiswell St., E.C.